



Wisconsin State Senator

PAM GALLOWAY

Senate District 29

**Testimony on Senate Bill 48
Senate Committee on Public Health, Human Services, and
Revenue
April 21, 2011**

Thank you, Chairwoman Lazich, and members of the committee for holding this hearing on Senate Bill 48 today.

Senate Bill 48 creates an individual income tax check-off for Special Olympics Wisconsin. As many of you know, Special Olympics Wisconsin is a statewide organization that provides those with cognitive disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Those who are at least eight years old and identified as having a cognitive disability are eligible for participation. Special Olympics Wisconsin serves almost 10,000 athletes all across the state.

Currently, Wisconsin has check-offs for breast cancer research, prostate cancer, the Veteran's Trust Fund, and several others. It is my hope that this legislation will help Special Olympics Wisconsin generate much needed dollars to better serve its athletes and increase the number of people it can reach statewide.

In my district, Wausau hosts the winter games, which includes sports that range from alpine skiing to speedskating. There is no question that the winter games provide a huge financial boost to Wausau, and all the communities which host the competitions.

I know that representatives from Special Olympics Wisconsin are here today and are eager to share more about the organization and how this bill will greatly benefit them. Before hearing from them,

I know Representative Nygren wanted to be here but is unable to attend. He submitted his testimony to the committee. I want to thank him for his work on this bill and the committee members for their consideration. I certainly urge your concurrence of Senate Bill 48 and am happy to take any questions you might have.



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

SENATE BILL 48 TESTIMONY

Special Olympics Wisconsin Income Tax Checkoff

Senate Committee on Public Health, Human Services and Revenue

Thursday, April 21, 2011

Chairwoman Galloway and members of the committee,

I would first like to thank you for bringing Senate Bill 48 in front of your committee for a public hearing.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to work very closely with Senator Galloway and Special Olympics Wisconsin on this legislation. This will allow us to provide another opportunity for the people of Wisconsin to support this great cause.

Special Olympics Wisconsin is a statewide organization that provides individuals with cognitive disabilities an opportunity to participate in year-round sports training and competition. This worthwhile program serves 10,000 athletes all across the state.

Special Olympics Wisconsin not only provides competitive events for athletes, it also offers preventive care and general wellness programs through their "Healthy Athletes" initiative. "Healthy Athletes" not only benefits the Special Olympics athletes through better physical and emotional health, but it also has a positive financial impact on the state. Programs offered by Special Olympics Wisconsin have been estimated to save nearly \$1 million on state Medicaid costs.

Dennis Alldridge, President of Special Olympics Wisconsin, will offer a more dynamic breakdown of the "Healthy Athletes" program following my testimony.

In Wisconsin, approximately 14,000 volunteers along with 3,500 coaches help to make Special Olympics one of the most popular charities in the state.

Currently, Wisconsin has nine income tax checkoff programs. A "checkoff" allows a taxpayer to designate a contribution out of their income tax rebate to a particular cause or fund. Since 1972, eight states have instituted checkoff programs to fund state Special Olympic committees.

According to the Department of Revenue, tax checkoff programs generated anywhere from \$36,000 to \$336,000 in additional revenue for charities, groups, and organizations across the state. Special Olympics Wisconsin projects that an income tax checkoff will generate an additional \$200,000 in revenue for the program.

In addition, Special Olympics Wisconsin has a positive economic impact for the state. According to the Stevens Point Convention and Visitors Bureau, each attendee who stays overnight spends an average of \$141 per stay. With nearly 6,500 visitors staying in the Stevens Point area for the Olympic Games each summer, the economic impact of these four days is nearly \$1 million.

I would also like to point out that this legislation is revenue neutral to the state, as the minimal administrative costs would be deducted before the donations are realized.

In conclusion, this legislation would provide Special Olympics Wisconsin with additional revenue to continue the outstanding wellness work they do with some of the most vulnerable citizens of our state.

Again, I would like to thank you for having a hearing today on Senate Bill 48. This very small request is something we can do to show our gratitude to the hardworking volunteers, staff and athletes of Special Olympics Wisconsin. I look forward to your support for this important piece of legislation.